

10 April 1980

FILE ONLY

INTELLIGENCE PANEL BACKS GATES
BY ELIOT BRENNER
WASHINGTON

Robert Gates, a CIA administrator with no covert operations experience, won the endorsement of the Senate Intelligence Committee Thursday for the No. 2 post at the intelligence agency.

Gates, who later must be confirmed by the full Senate as deputy director of the CIA, received unanimous support from the members present in a rare open session.

If the Senate confirms Gates, he will be responsible for day-to-day operations and intelligence community policy, replacing retiring CIA official John McMahon.

Gates, a career analyst and administrator with no covert operations experience, told the panel he supports covert actions, noting the Soviet Union spends about \$4 billion a year on covert operations.

"The experience of the last 10 years suggests that in many of these cases diplomacy alone is not an effective institution. That experience also would show that overt military action by the United States is either not appropriate or would not be supported by the American people or Congress.

"At that point the United States has two options, develop other instruments to carry out its policies or to turn and walk away."

Gates said he regarded covert action as an "appropriate instrument of foreign policy," as long as it adheres to the administration's overall approach to foreign relations.

The CIA administrator acknowledged the agency's difficulty handling defectors and agreed with Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska, who said the agency lacked a "structure of accountability."

"My perception is identical to yours. There were organizational deficiencies. We have made organizational changes so that a single individual and organization are accountable for the entire process of defectors," said Gates.

Last year, Soviet defector Vitaly Yurchenko walked away from a CIA officer at a Georgetown restaurant and appeared at the Soviet Embassy, much to the embarrassment of the CIA.